

Theatre Group Debuts in Boston

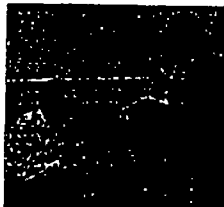
Miss Julie then heads to the PAC

By MORAG MACLACILAN

The Duxbury founded Gurnet Theatre Project is set to open its second performance, which also happens to mark the company's Boston debut.

Duxbury High School Class of 2000 graduates Brian Fahey and Michelle Kordis Hatfield return to the stage with a production of *Miss Julie*. The play originally written by August Strindberg and adapted by Irish dramatist Frank McGuinness is the

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Real life husband and wife Hugh Lawton and Gillian MacKay-Smith play the leading roles in *Miss Julie*. MacKay-Smith as Miss Julie and Lawton as her father's valet.

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project's third play since debuting at the Myles Standish Monument last July with *The Illusion*.

Fahey directs the production of *Miss Julie* as Kordis Hatfield heads back to the stage as one member of the three-person cast. She joins Fahey's fellow Northeastern University graduate Gillian MacKay-Smith and the man MacKay-Smith and Fahey met one summer while they were studying at the Gaicety School of Acting in Dublin...Hugh Lawton, Lawton, who hails from Dublin, and MacKay-Smith have since married.

"After *Waiting for Godot* was canceled, we wanted to bounce back. It (*Miss Julie*) was the perfect play for the summer," Fahey said. "We wanted to do something more serious and more focused. The translation of the play by Irish author Frank McGuinness is fresh and speakable. It's meant to be performed and not read."

"It's great having Hugh as a member of the cast because he can help us with the text," Kordis Hatfield said.

"Since it's written in the Irish vernacular, Hugh was perfect for the part," MacKay-Smith added.

Waiting for Godot was canceled after two members of the cast suffered family tragedies right before the play opened. *Miss Julie* features different actors, Fahey said the group has been doing read

application in fast. We ended up applying at the same time as another company; so we each got two weeks. We were really lucky because these theatres usually book a year in advance."

Miss Julie will open today, (Wednesday, May 10) and run until Saturday, May 20 at The Plaza Theatre at the Boston Center for the Arts on Tremont Street in the South End. The cast will then travel to Duxbury, where the play will run from Friday, May 26, until Sunday, May 28, at the Performing Arts Center. Kordis Hatfield said the audience will actually be on the stage with the actors when the performance comes to the PAC.

"This is a great space because it is surrounded by

Boston, by the time we head to Duxbury we will know the show backwards and forwards," MacKay-Smith said.

"We're looking forward to it." The play also marks the first time MacKay-Smith and Lawton have worked together. She plays Miss Julie, the daughter of a wealthy nobleman. He plays her father's valet. The two have an affair, which was extremely taboo given the pair's different social classes. MacKay-Smith said that since the pair is married, it was a professional challenge to make the affair look awkward.

"*Miss Julie* is not an easy piece. It's incredibly complex. Every day I find something new. There are so many layers; you can always go deeper," MacKay-Smith said. "We hope people come and see it. We're not doing theatre for the sake of curtain calls and money, but for the work. It's been a fascinating repertoire thus far."

"The play is less produced and almost a risk to perform, especially for a young company with its Boston debut," Fahey added.

With *Miss Julie* about to open, Fahey and Kordis Hatfield are already planning for the summer production of the Gurnet Theatre Project. The pair will take a break from acting and directing to produce

William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. The duo will produce the production back at the Standish Monument while *The Illusion*'s actress and Duxbury resident Kristen Schnibbe directs the play set for August 10-13.

"It's only the beginning," Fahey said.

Tickets for the Boston performance of *Miss Julie* run from \$15 to \$20 and can be purchased by calling the BCA at 617-933-8600. Tickets for the production at the PAC are \$10 and can be obtained by calling Fahey at 617-771-7032.

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-MacKay-Smith

throughs of the play since January and began practicing three to four times a week in March. Since Northeastern is his and MacKay-Smith's alma mater, Fahey said the university's staff has been very supportive and allows the group to rehearse in its classrooms.

With practice space reserved, Fahey said he began looking for any theaters in Boston that would allow the project to perform *Miss Julie*. "I began hounding Darren Evans of the Boston Center for the Arts," Fahey said. "Then one day he called and said there was a four week cancellation and to get out

professional companies like the Huntington Theatre," Fahey said about the Plaza Theatre. "It's cool to be around all those artists in the South End."

Coincidentally, Fahey and MacKay-Smith both worked at the Boston Center for the Arts or the BCA while studying at Northeastern. However, this will be the first time the pair is working for themselves instead of with another company.

"I hope the people that want an excuse to go into the city will come," Fahey said of the Boston production of *Miss Julie*.

"After two weeks in